65p

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

150

Radionics
Pontefract's poltergeist
Livingston UFO terror
Princes in the Tower
The French prophet

Aus $1.85 NZ $1.80 SA R1.85 US $1.85 IR 85p

THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

Published weekly by Orbis Publishing Limited
Orbis House, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

Volume 13 Issue 150

Consultants to The Unexplained
Professor A. J. Ellison
Dr J. Allen Hynek
Brian Inglis
Colin Wilson

Editorial Director
Brian Innes
Editor
Peter Brookesmith
Deputy Editor
Lynn Picknett
Executive Editor
Lesley Riley
Sub Editors
Chris Cooper
Jenny Dawson
Shona Grimbly
Hildi Hawkins

Picture Researchers
Anne Horton
Paul Snelgrove
Frances Vargo
Editorial Manager
Clare Byatt
Art Editor
Stephen Westcott
Designer
Richard Burgess
Art Buyer
Jean Hardy
Production Co-ordinator
Nicky Bowden

Circulation Director
David Breed
Marketing Director
Michael Joyce

Contents

Princes in the Tower
MURDER MOST FOUL? 2981
Did Richard III really have his nephews murdered? Or was the story of the evil deed merely propaganda?
Graham Fuller and Ian Knight

Poltergeists
BLACK MONK'S REIGN OF TERROR 2986
In 1966 a council house in Pontefract, Yorkshire, became 'infested' with a terrifying poltergeist: we investigate
Colin Wilson

Livingston
UFOS: THE GRIP OF FEAR 2990
A forester is attacked by 'robots' that emerge from a UFO – we begin an enquiry into the fascinating Livingston case
Steuart Campbell

French prophet
THE UNKNOWN PROPHET 2994
In 1914 a French prisoner of the Germans predicted not only the outcome of the war, but also the future of the world
Elmar Gruber

Radionics
SECRETS OF THE BLACK BOX 2998
We look at the history of a strange diagnostic device, the 'black box' of radionics. Does it work, and if so, how?
Francis King

Picture acknowledgements
Cover: Photri; Giraudon (inset); **2981:** Bridgeman Art Library/Royal Holloway College; **2982**–**2983:** Topham; **2983:** Mansell Collection (tl); Topham (tr); artwork by Jean Morley (c); **2984:** Spectrum (c); **2985:** Giraudon (c); Nostell Priory, Wakefield (b); **2986**–**2987:** A. F. Harrison, Wakefield; **2988:** A. F. Harrison, Wakefield (t); Mary Evans Picture Library (b); **2989:** A. F. Harrison, Wakefield; **2990:** map by Colin Edwards & Partners; **2990**–**2991:** illustration by Murray Aikman; **2991:** Malcolm Drummond; **2992:** Andrew Wilson; **2993:** artwork by Studio Briggs; **2994:** Elmar Gruber; **2995:** Elmar Gruber (t); Topham (c); **2996:** Elmar Gruber (t); map by Ed Stuart (c); **2997:** Rex Features; **2998:** *Report on radionics* by E. W. Russell (I and b); SPR/Paul Snelgrove (c); **2999:** Topham; **3000:** SPR; **back cover:** Popperfoto

© 1983 Orbis Publishing Limited. Typesetting by Servis Filmsetting Limited. Reproduction by La Cromolito, Milan. Printed in Great Britain by Jarrold & Sons Ltd, Norwich 18838

The Unexplained UK 65p. IR 85p. Aus. $1.85. NZ $1.80. SA R1.85. USA $1.85.
How to obtain copies of The Unexplained Copies are obtained by placing a regular order at your newsagent, or by taking out a subscription.
Subscription Rates
For six months (26 issues) £18.90, for one year (52 issues) £37.80. Send your order and remittance to The Unexplained Subscriptions, Punch Subscription Services, Watling Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK2 2BW, being sure to state the number of the first issue required.
Back numbers
U.K. & Eire: Back Nos are obtainable at cover price from your newsagent or from The Unexplained Back Nos. Orbis Publishing Ltd, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT – post free.
Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Europe & Malta: Back Nos are available at cover price from your newsagent. In case of difficulty write to the address in your country given for binders. South African readers should add sales tax.
How to obtain binders for The Unexplained
U.K. and Eire: Send a cheque/postal order for £3.25 per binder (incl. p & p) payable to Orbis Publishing Ltd to: The Unexplained Binders, Orbis House, 22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT. Please state the volume numbers required.
Australia: Binders are available through your local newsagent. In case of difficulty write to The Unexplained Binders, Gordon and Gotch (Aus) Ltd, 114 William Street, PO Box 767G, Melbourne, Vic. 3001.
New Zealand: Binders are available through your local newsagent or from The Unexplained Binders, Gordon and Gotch (NZ) Ltd, PO Box 1595, Wellington.
South Africa: Binders are available through your local newsagent or through any branch of Central News Agency. In case of difficulty write to The Unexplained Binders, Intermag, PO Box 57394, Springfield 2137.
Europe: Write with remittance of £4.00 per binder (including postage and packing) payable to Orbis Publishing Ltd, to The Unexplained Binders, Orbis Publishing Ltd, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT, England, being sure to state the volume number(s) required.
Malta: Binders are obtainable by ordering from your local newsagent price £3.25. In case of difficulty write to The Unexplained Binders, Miller (Malta) Ltd, PO Box 272, 18a Scots Street, Valletta.

NOTE: Binders and Back Numbers are obtainable subject to availability of stocks. Whilst every attempt is made to keep the price of issues and binders constant, the publishers reserve the right to increase the stated prices at any time when circumstances dictate. Binders depicted in this publication are those produced for the **U.K. market only** and may not necessarily be identical to binders produced for sale outside the U.K.
Binders and issues may be subject to import duty and/or local taxes which are not included in the above prices unless stated.

Murder most foul?

In 1483 the two young sons of Edward IV were murdered in the Tower of London by their wicked uncle Richard of Gloucester – or were they? GRAHAM FULLER and IAN KNIGHT examine the facts in the light of the latest evidence

ON THE MORNING of 22 May 1455 two armed forces converged on St Albans, north-west of London. One was led by the former Lord Protector of the Realm, Richard, Duke of York, and the other by the mentally unstable Lancastrian king, Henry VI, with his powerful minister, the Duke of Somerset. The encounter was short and fierce: within an hour, Somerset was dead, and the King taken prisoner.

The first battle of St Albans marked the beginning of a bitter and bloody dynastic struggle that was to last for 30 years. Dubbed the 'Wars of the Roses' by later historians, because the opposing factions supposedly adopted a red and white rose as their respective emblems, this period was one of the most brutal in English history, as well as being a prelude to its greatest mystery.

The Princes in the Tower, in a painting by John Millais (1829–1896). Edward was 12 and Richard 10 when they were last seen in July 1483 playing together in the Tower of London. They disappeared without trace – presumed murdered

The protagonists were the mighty families of Lancaster and York, both descended from Edward III who had died three quarters of a century earlier. The Lancastrians had been in power since 1399, when Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, had seized the crown from Richard II. The house of York might have remained content with their status as the second most powerful family in the land, had not Henry V died young, leaving an eight-month-old son as his heir. The reign of Henry VI was a disaster. With a minor as king, the arrogance of the powerful nobles increased; and when, at the age of 15, Henry began to rule in his own right, he proved to be weak, ineffectual and mentally unstable. Nor was his young French wife, Margaret of Anjou, particularly popular. In gratitude to the nobles who had helped arrange her marriage she appointed many of them ministers; they proceeded to give away England's possessions in France.

King in name only

Matters came to a head in 1453, when Henry's first bout of insanity occurred. Richard, Duke of York, backed by the influential Earl of Warwick, was appointed lord protector, a position that made him virtual king. When Henry's sanity returned two years later York was unwilling to relinquish power, and the parties fought it out at the first battle of St Albans. The captured Henry continued as titular king, but with York as the power behind the throne; three decades of intermittent civil war followed.

After York was killed at the battle of Wakefield in December 1460, his son Edward roundly defeated the Lancastrians at Towton the following March and was crowned Edward IV. But the struggle was not over. Henry was restored in 1470; the following spring the Lancastrian forces were defeated by Edward, first at Barnet and then at Tewkesbury, where Henry's son, the Prince of Wales, was killed. Edward followed through by having Henry murdered in the Tower of London on the night of 21 May 1471. He then reigned as a popular and energetic monarch for over 10 years, until his health collapsed and he died suddenly, at the age of 40, on 9 April 1483.

It was a severe blow to the Yorkist cause. His eldest son, also Edward, was a mere lad of 12, and it seemed that another prolonged regency lay ahead, with all its attendant

The seeds of the Wars of the Roses between York and Lancaster had been sown when Henry V (left, from an effigy in Westminster Abbey, London) died at the age of 35 leaving an eight-month-old son as his heir. Henry VI grew up to be a recluse, of uncertain mental stability; he was unable to make decisions and left state affairs to his ministers and Queen. Below: Henry VI during the battle of Towton (1461), in a painting by William Dyce (1806–1864)

problems. This prospect was averted, however, by the prompt action of the young King's uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Richard had been one of his brother Edward's staunchest supporters, and had fought fiercely at his side at Barnet and Tewkesbury. His prestige was enormous, and he had been named by the late King as lord protector and guardian of his son.

The young Edward had been brought up at Ludlow castle, on the Welsh Marches, surrounded by members of the powerful Woodville family, relations of his mother Elizabeth Woodville. On 24 April he set out to ride to London, accompanied by his maternal uncle Lord Rivers and a troop of 2000 armed men. In an extremely effective *coup d'état*, Richard, accompanied by the Duke of Buckingham, intercepted the party on the road on 30 April, arrested Lord Rivers, and brought the young King under escort to London, where he was eventually lodged in the Tower. His mother, hearing news of the *coup*, promptly took sanctuary with her younger son in the Palace of Westminster.

June was a month of decisive action for Richard. Hastings, his brother Edward's chief adviser, was charged with treason and summarily beheaded. Rivers and other leading members of the Woodville faction were executed. The Queen was persuaded to give up her younger son, the 10-year-old Richard of York, who was taken to join his brother in the Tower. On 22 June a cleric, one Dr Ralph Shaw, preached a sermon at St Paul's Cross proclaiming both the Princes bastards, on the grounds that Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was invalid; on 26 June Richard had himself proclaimed king, and on 6 July he was crowned. All this time, the Princes remained in their lodgings in the Tower of London.

What happened to the Princes?

The bewildering speed with which Richard had achieved his objective worried many of his subjects. It is true that he had avoided the risk of civil war; but few people believed that Edward's sons were indeed illegitimate. Richard's actions were those of a usurper. In September a fully fledged revolt broke out, led by the Duke of Buckingham; its objectives were to crown Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who was a Lancastrian with a tenuous claim to the throne. The rebellion fizzled out, and Buckingham was beheaded. Significantly, when the rebels first began to march, they demanded the reinstatement of Edward V; later, to justify their uprising, they claimed that both Edward and Richard were dead, and that Richard III had murdered them.

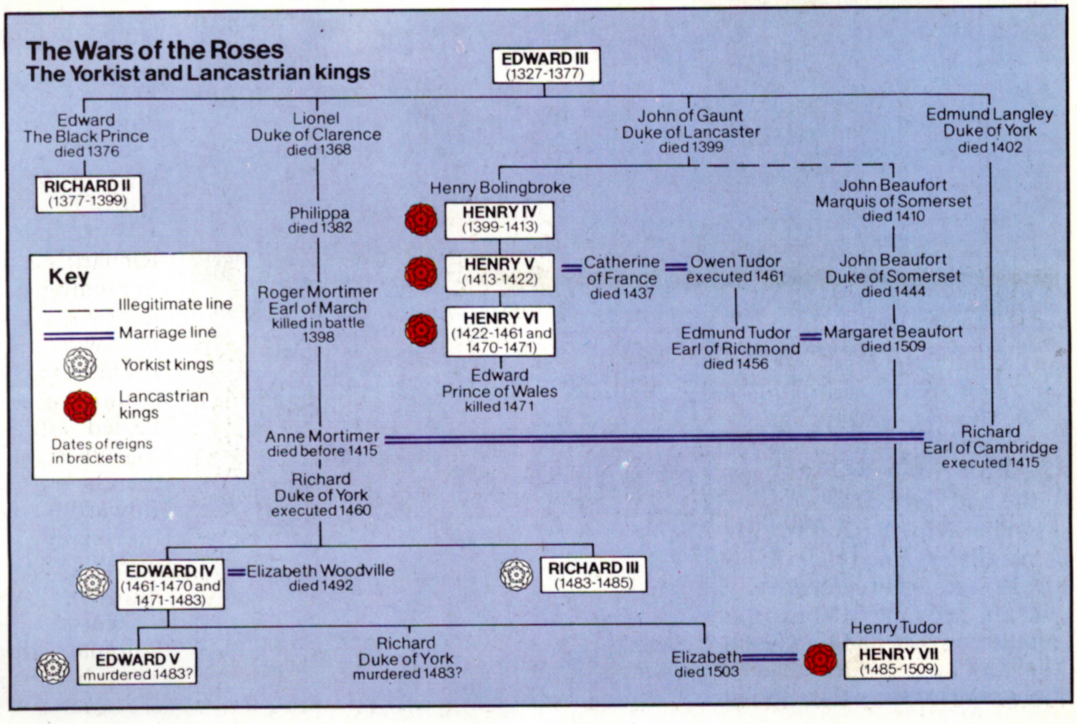
Was this true? Certainly it seems that Sir Thomas More thought so. Writing in about 1513, he described in his *History of the reign of Richard III* how Richard sent a messenger

Right: Prince Edward's maternal uncle, Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers (kneeling), presenting a volume to his brother-in-law Edward IV. Edward IV's Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, sits behind him, and his son Edward, Prince of Wales (at the time about seven years old) stands in front of his parents. The Prince of Wales had his own separate household, composed mainly of his mother's relations, at Ludlow castle, and scarcely knew his father's brother, Richard of Gloucester. When his father died, Richard 'kidnapped' him from the Woodville faction

shortly after his coronation to the Keeper of the Tower, Sir Robert Brackenbury, ordering him to kill the Princes. Brackenbury refused. Richard then sent an enthusiastic protégé, Sir James Tyrell, who persuaded Brackenbury to hand over the keys to the rooms where the Princes were lodged 'for one night'. More describes what followed with shocked relish:

> Sir James Tyrell devised that they should be murdered in their beds. To the execution whereof, he appointed Miles Forest, one of the four that kept them, a fellow fleshed in murder beforetime. To him he joined one John Dighton, his own horsekeeper, a big, broad, square, strong knave. Then, all

Right: this simplified family tree shows how the two factions of York and Lancaster were both descended from Edward III. Richard of Gloucester (above right) claimed that his brother Edward IV had entered into a contract of marriage with one Dame Eleanor Butler prior to marrying the beautiful Elizabeth Woodville when he was 22. This meant that the young Princes were illegitimate, and Richard was therefore perfectly entitled to the crown. Henry Tudor (above) had a very tenuous claim, being descended from John of Gaunt on his mother's side through an illegitimate line. He had strong motives for despatching the Princes



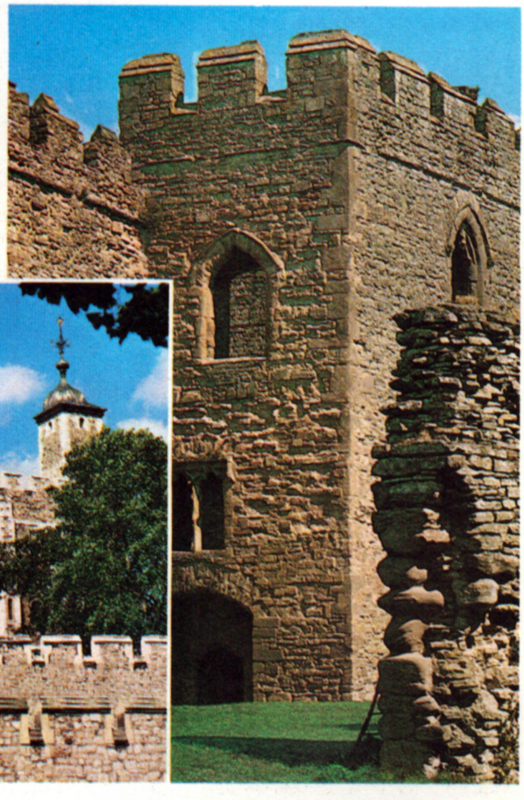
> the others being removed from them, this Miles Forest and John Dighton about midnight (the . . . children lying in their beds) came into the chamber and suddenly lapped them up among the clothes, so bewrapped and entangled them, keeping down by force the featherbed and pillows hard unto their mouths, that within a while, smothered and stifled, their breath failing, they gave up to God their innocent souls into the joys of heaven, leaving to their tormentors their bodies dead in the bed.

To dispose of the bodies, More adds, Tyrell caused the murderers to bury them 'at the foot of the stair, under a great heap of stones'.

It is a vivid account, based, More claimed, on a confession made by Tyrell before his execution for treason in 1502. But More was writing 30 years after the events supposedly took place and, as an upholder of the Tudor state, was intent on blackening the reputation of the man Henry Tudor had deposed. It was More who claimed that Richard III was 'ill-featured' and 'crook-backed', although no contemporary portrait of him suggests he was either ugly or deformed.

If More's account is suspect, what other evidence is there that the Princes were murdered? *The great chronicle of London* (*c.* 1500) records that during the time Sir Edmund Shaw was mayor of London (that is, before the end of October 1483) 'the children of King Edward were seen shooting and playing in the garden of the Tower by sundry times.' And an Italian, Dominic Mancini, who was visiting London, wrote in December 1483 in his *Usurpation of Richard III*:

> He and his brother were withdrawn into the inner apartments of the Tower proper, and day by day began to be seen more rarely behind the bars and windows, till at length they ceased to appear altogether. A Strasbourg doctor, the last of his attendants whose services the King [Edward] enjoyed, reported that the young King, like a



This scene of the two Princes being parted from their mother by Richard of Gloucester (top, after a 19th-century painting by N. Gosse) probably never took place. After his father's death Edward V rode direct from Ludlow castle (above right) to London, and was met on the road by his uncle Richard, who escorted him the rest of the way and lodged him in the Tower of London (above). Richard later persuaded Elizabeth Woodville to allow her younger son to join his brother in the Tower

> victim prepared for the sacrifice, sought remission of his sins by daily confession and penance, because he believed that death was facing him. . . . And already there was a suspicion that he had been done away with.

Mancini left England in July 1483, and it is generally assumed that that was the last time the Princes were seen alive. His was the first written account to voice the suspicion that something dire had befallen them – although the fear was widespread at the time of Buckingham's revolt in September.

The case against Richard III rests chiefly on his failure to comment on the Princes' fate. He had both motive and opportunity to kill them; and there is no record that he ever suggested anyone else had done so. It is unlikely that the Princes could have remained alive in the Tower in secret; the Tower was a bustling community inhabited by hundreds of soldiers, servants and residents, and visited daily by merchants and workmen. The fact that the disappearance of the Princes coincided with the first rumours of their deaths is significant.

Could they have been smuggled out of the Tower and then lost to history? In March 1484 Elizabeth Woodville agreed to allow her daughters to leave sanctuary and go to Richard's court; it is almost inconceivable that she would have allowed her daughters to be brought up by their brothers' murderer. Some historians have suggested that she herself left sanctuary at this time and went to live in retirement in the country, possibly with her two sons in her keeping. In March 1983 it was suggested by Mr Jack Leslau that a painting by Hans Holbein of Sir Thomas More and his family contained evidence that the Princes survived, and were raised under false names.

Another theory is that the Princes succumbed to illness and died in prison. But if this were so, why was the fact not announced? And what became of the bodies?

If we assume that the boys were indeed murdered, who else is suspect apart from Richard? One likely candidate is the Duke of Buckingham. He had been a prime mover in Richard's *coup* early in the year, and was both ambitious and ruthless. He might have killed the Princes some time before his revolt in the autumn of 1483, either to curry favour with Richard (before the rupture in their relations) or to strengthen the claim of his own candidate for the throne, Henry Tudor. Yet it seems unlikely that he could have masterminded the Princes' death in the Tower without Richard's complicity. And if he had killed them, why did Richard not denounce him when he rebelled?

In fact Henry Tudor seems to have had the strongest motive of all to despatch the Princes. While they remained alive, assuming they were legitimate, they invalidated his claim to the throne. And if they were illegitimate, as Richard had proclaimed, then so was their sister, Elizabeth of York, whom Henry subsequently married to strengthen his claim. When he succeeded to the throne, after defeating Richard at Bosworth on 22 August 1485, he kept very quiet about the Princes until he allegedly produced a confession from Sir James Tyrell (who died in 1502); it may be that Tyrell killed them on

Henry's account, not Richard's.

Yet another theory has it that, far from murdering the Princes, Tyrell removed them from the Tower at Richard's behest and had them brought up secretly, with their mother, at his house, Gipping Hall, in Suffolk. Only in 1513 did Henry feel it expedient to publish the story of the Princes' murder – after Tyrell and the boys' mother and sister (Henry's Queen) were all dead.

Bones discovered

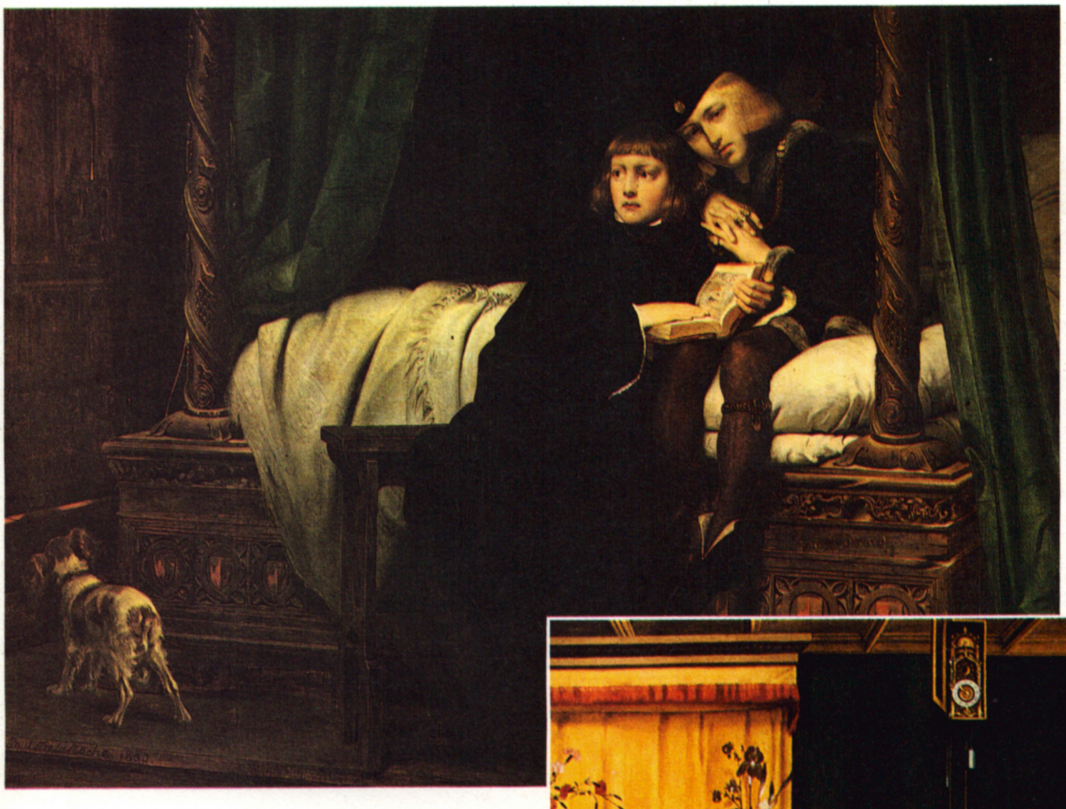
Speculation about the fate of the young Princes was revived in Charles II's reign when, in 1674, workmen demolishing a staircase in the Tower of London's White Tower (where the Princes had been lodged) found a wooden chest buried some 10 feet (3 metres) deep. It contained the skeletons of two children, the taller lying on its back, the other lying across it, face down. Charles had them examined, and concluded that they were the remains of the Princes. He had them reinterred in Westminster Abbey, in a white marble tomb designed by Christopher Wren.

In 1933 permission was given for the bones to be exhumed and examined by a team headed by Professor William Wright, a pathologist, and Dr George Northcroft, a dental surgeon. Although it was found that the skeletons were incomplete (some bones had apparently been lost, and some may have been stolen by souvenir hunters in the 17th century) it was possible to identify them as the remains of two children, one about 10 years of age, the other about 12. It was even possible to deduce from the jaw bones that the elder child had been suffering from a severe infection of the lower jaw. It was concluded that the remains were probably those of Edward V and his brother Richard of York.

Even though it has not been possible to examine the bones again in the light of today's improved dating techniques, it still seems possible that they are those of the Princes in the Tower. But because the children were below the age of puberty it was not possible to identify the sex of the remains. Nor was it possible to date the bones accurately – they could belong to a much earlier period than the 15th century. Yet it seems a strange coincidence that they should be found buried beneath the stair just as Sir Thomas More described. Richard III continues to stare enigmatically from his portraits, his silence as incriminating as ever.

Further reading

Elizabeth Jenkins, *The Princes in the Tower*, Hamish Hamilton 1978
Charles Ross, *Richard III*, Eyre Methuen 1981
Audrey Williamson, *The mystery of the Princes*, Alan Sutton 1978



Left: the two young Princes fearfully await their murderers in the Tower (in a 19th-century painting by Paul Delaroche). However, perhaps they were not murdered, but smuggled out of the Tower and brought up under assumed names: it has been suggested that in the painting by Hans Holbein (below) of Sir Thomas More and his family, the young man leaning on the door (extreme right) is the younger prince, Richard of York, as an adult

A remarkable case in which a poltergeist seemed determined to provide spectators with exactly the phenomena they expected was reported in north Yorkshire in 1966. COLIN WILSON tells the strange story of the black monk of Pontefract

Black monk's reign of terror

A COUNCIL HOUSE in Pontefract, Yorkshire, became in 1966 the scene of one of the most spectacular hauntings in the history of psychical research. On 1 September 1966 most of the Pritchard family of 30 East Drive, Pontefract, went on holiday to Devon, leaving Jean Pritchard's mother, Mrs Sarah Scholes, to look after their 15-year-old son Phillip.

Mrs Scholes was knitting in the lounge when there was a sudden gust of wind that rattled all the windows and made the back door of the house slam. The room became unaccountably chilly. Phillip walked in carrying a cup of coffee and stared in astonishment. Floating gently through the air was a grey powder like chalk dust. Mrs Scholes had not even noticed it. Phillip's first thought was that the whitewash on the ceiling was disintegrating. But as he came into the room, he realised that this was impossible. The top half of the room was perfectly clear; the falling powder started on a level below his head. It covered all the furniture with a thin white dust.

Mrs Scholes decided to consult her other daughter, Marie Kelly, who lived opposite. As they walked into the Pritchards' kitchen, Mrs Kelly almost fell – there was a large pool of water in the middle of the floor. She took a cloth and started to mop it up. As fast as she did so, other patches of water appeared. They tried lifting the linoleum – but the floor underneath was perfectly dry. They sent for a workman from the water board, but he could find nothing wrong.

It was not until 7 p.m. that Mrs Scholes suspected they were being haunted. The phenomena continued. When a wardrobe in the corner of a bedroom started tottering across the floor like a drunken man, Mrs Scholes decided it was time to find somewhere else to sleep for the night. She and Phillip went across to Mrs Kelly's house and slept in the spare beds.

Marie Kelly and her husband Vic had no desire to sleep. They remembered that one of their neighbours, a Mr O'Donald, was interested in ghosts, and went to call on him. At their request, he went back with them to the 'haunted house'. As they entered, they were met by a blast of cold air. But after that, the ghost seemed to lose interest. They stayed in

the house for two hours while Mr O'Donald talked to them about ghosts and poltergeists – mentioning that poltergeists were often fond of tearing up photographs. Soon after this, he left. As Vic and Marie Kelly were leaving the house, they heard a crash. A wedding photograph of Jean and Joe Pritchard was lying amid shattered glass, slashed from end to end as if with a sharp knife.

And that, for the moment, was the end of the Pontefract haunting. When Joe and Jean Pritchard returned the following Saturday afternoon with their 12-year-old daughter Diane, they were inclined to think Mrs Scholes was exaggerating. The house in East Drive had returned to normal.

For two years all was peaceful. Then one afternoon, as Jean Pritchard was drinking a cup of tea with her mother, Mrs Scholes said, 'Did you hear something?' Jean Pritchard went into the hall. At the foot of the stairs lay the counterpane from her bed. Ten minutes later, there was a crash; the counterpane from Phillip's bed was lying at the bottom of the stairs together with a number of upended plant pots. Mrs Scholes said: 'I told you. It's starting again.'

Left: the council house in Pontefract, Yorkshire, that, in 1966, was the scene of the spectacular poltergeist activities that later became known as the case of the black monk of Pontefract. Newspaper cuttings of the time (below left) give a characteristically lurid idea of what was going on in the house: 'Terror that lurked in house of fear'; 'Bizarre hauntings of the black monk'; and 'There's evil here, said vicar'

She was right. That night, as Jean Pritchard lay in bed, the atmosphere suddenly became curiously chilly – a sensation that was to become familiar to her in days to come. Through the partly open bedroom door she could see something moving in the corner of the landing. With considerable courage, she went and switched on the landing light. Something flew past her face, missing it by a fraction of an inch – it was a paintbrush with which she had been decorating a bedroom. And the moving object was a roll of wallpaper, standing upright like a cobra about to strike, swaying gently back and forwards. As she made a grab for it, it collapsed onto the floor. The carpet sweeper flew up into the air and began to swing around like a club. Jean scrambled back into her bedroom and managed to scream. Within seconds, the whole family was on the landing. As they stood there, paintbrushes and decorating materials began to fly through the air.

The Pritchard family got little sleep that night – or on subsequent nights. Diane seemed to be the intruder's special target. She would often be thrown out of bed several times in the course of the night. Yet although she suffered from lack of sleep, she was never actually hurt.

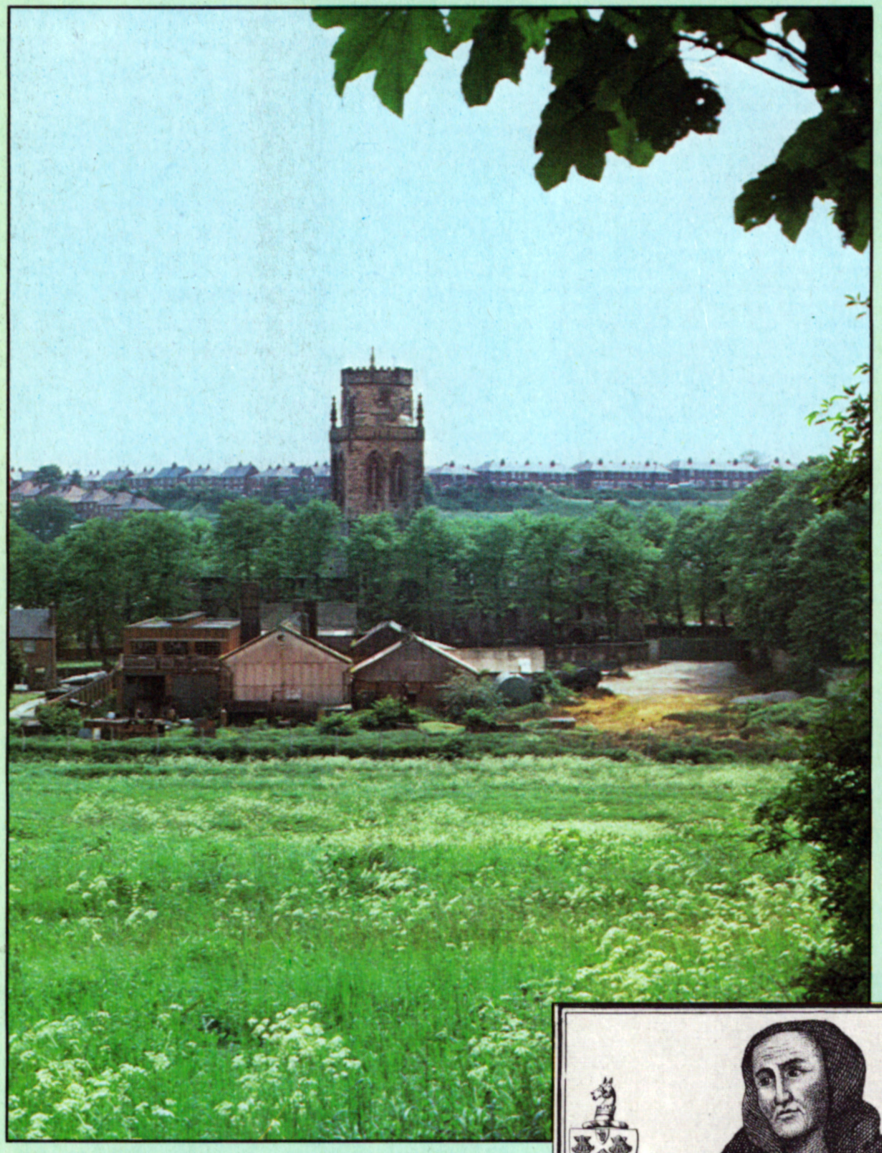
They called in the local vicar to enquire about exorcism. When the house resounded to a number of loud thumps, he told them he thought their problem was subsidence. But when a candlestick rose up from a shelf and floated under the vicar's nose, he changed his mind and advised them that there was 'something evil' present, and that they ought to move. Jean flatly rejected his advice. She had no intention of being driven out of her home by a ghost.

Joe's sister Maude decided that the poltergeist phenomena were being faked by the Pritchard children. One snowy evening she arrived at 30 East Drive and announced that she had come to investigate. When the lights went out, Aunt Maude declared: 'It was those kids.' Then the refrigerator door swing open, and they saw a jug float across the kitchen, poise itself above Aunt Maude's head and then tilt and deluge her with milk.

Aunt Maude remained convinced that the children were responsible. Jean invited her to stay the night and see for herself. As they moved into the lounge, the lights went out

Above: Jean Pritchard (left) and her sister Marie Kelly, photographed in 1983. It was while Mrs Pritchard was away on holiday in 1966 that the strange events at her house began. Mrs Kelly witnessed one of the earliest of them: water that appeared to well up uncontrollably through the linoleum on the Pritchards' kitchen floor

Right: Diane Cane, Jean Pritchard's daughter, photographed in 1983. Did Diane, and her older brother Phillip, act as centres for the poltergeist?



and there was a violent banging noise. In the kitchen, the contents of the refrigerator, including a string of sausages, had been scattered all over the room.

They all retired to bed early. Jean, Diane and Aunt Maude moved into Phillip's bedroom. Jean had only just climbed into bed when the reading lamp rose into the air, sailed slowly across the room and out through the door. Then they saw something moving by the door – and a closer look showed that it was the four small bulbs that produced the glow effect in the electric fire downstairs.

Then they saw the hands. For a moment, they were petrified. One enormous hand appeared over the top of the door, while the other was near the bottom – the distance between them was well over 6 feet (2 metres). A closer look showed that the hands were actually Aunt Maude's fur gloves.

Aunt Maude, who was of an evangelical disposition – and a member of the Salvation Army – pointed accusingly at the gloves and said sternly, 'Get away. You're evil!' One of the gloves beckoned to them. Then, when none of them moved, it clenched into a fist that shook threateningly in Aunt Maude's direction. Aunt Maude burst into *Onward Christian soldiers*. At this, the gloves began to conduct her singing, beating in time. Jean admits that she had to smile. Then the gloves vanished again. Aunt Maude left the next morning.

The phenomena continued, and the family began to become anxious. Vic Kelly managed to obtain a bottle of holy water, and went round the house sprinkling it everywhere. There was a sudden violent crash, and the water began to trickle down the walls in little streams. After this, the poltergeist became rather more aggressive, as if to indicate that it resented the attempt to make it feel unwelcome.

Soon afterwards the intruder began to manifest itself visually. One night, as Jean and Joe lay in bed, the door opened, and they saw a dim figure silhouetted against the light from the street lamp outside. It appeared to be a tall man with a hood over his head. When they switched on the bedroom light, he vanished. The Pritchards' next door neighbour, one Mrs Mountain, also saw the figure, which she identified as that of a black-robed monk. Jean had given a talk to the local Spiritualist church on the haunting, and a driver took her and Rene back to Jean's house. They invited the driver in for a cup of tea. Suddenly the lights went out. Rene felt a hand on the back of her head, and saw just behind her a long black garment like a

Left: a British Cluniac monk, and (above left) the site of a Cluniac priory, destroyed during the Reformation, close to the Pritchards' house in Pontefract. During the final stages of the disturbances, the poltergeist was seen several times in the form of a black-robed monk, among others by the Pritchards' neighbour, Mrs May Mountain (above right). Another neighbour suggested that the apparition might be the spirit of a Cluniac monk who had been hanged in the time of Henry VIII for raping a young girl – but research by author Colin Wilson failed to reveal any evidence to corroborate this theory

dressing gown descending almost to the floor. When the lights came on again a moment later, the man in the black robe had vanished.

One evening in 1969, as Diane was in the kitchen making coffee, the lights went out. The family heard her scream and rushed into the hall. They found that she was being dragged up the stairs by some invisible force, her cardigan stretched out in front of her. Phillip and Jean tried to pull her backwards, but let go and tumbled down the stairs. Suddenly Diane was free again. Her throat was covered with red fingermarks – yet the poltergeist had not actually hurt her.

One day soon afterwards, as Phillip and Diane were watching television, Phillip looked around and saw an enormous shape on the other side of the frosted glass door that led to the dining room. He rushed to the door and saw the tall black figure in the process of vanishing – he says that it seemed to disappear into the kitchen floor.

This was the poltergeist's last appearance. I myself was told about the case some 10 years after it occurred, and went to interview the Pritchards with the intention of using their story in a book on poltergeists. At the time, I was convinced that a poltergeist is some kind of manifestation of the unconscious mind. I even had a theory to explain how it obtains its energy. Some dowsers are so sensitive to underground water that they are thrown into wild convulsions by the force. I suspected that the teenagers who are usually the 'focus' of poltergeist hauntings are also able somehow to make use of this force.

A taste for mischief

After interviewing the Pritchards and talking to neighbours, I reluctantly concluded that the 'unconscious mind' theory is simply untenable. I came round to the view that had been put to me by psychical researcher and writer Guy Lyon Playfair – that a poltergeist is some kind of disembodied spirit with a taste for mischief.

It was a view that I had already begun to consider before I met the Pritchards. There are just a few poltergeist cases that have taken place in completely empty houses – with no 'disturbed teenager' to provide a focus. And the point was now reinforced by the fact that this poltergeist had put in an appearance on two occasions in the Pritchards' home – first when Phillip reached puberty, then when Diane passed through the same stage. The reasonable explanation is, it seems to me, that some kind of 'spirit' lies latent in the house in East Drive, waiting for someone to provide the kind of energy it needs to manifest itself.

But what is the identity of the spirit? The Pritchards' house is not far from the site of an ancient priory that was destroyed under Henry VIII. A stream runs under the Pritchards' house. Nearby once stood the town gallows. A neighbour told the Pritchards that she had read a book from the local library that told of a monk from the priory who had been hanged for raping a young girl. I searched through the reference library in Pontefract, and assured myself that no such crime had ever occurred – if it had, it would certainly have been recorded.

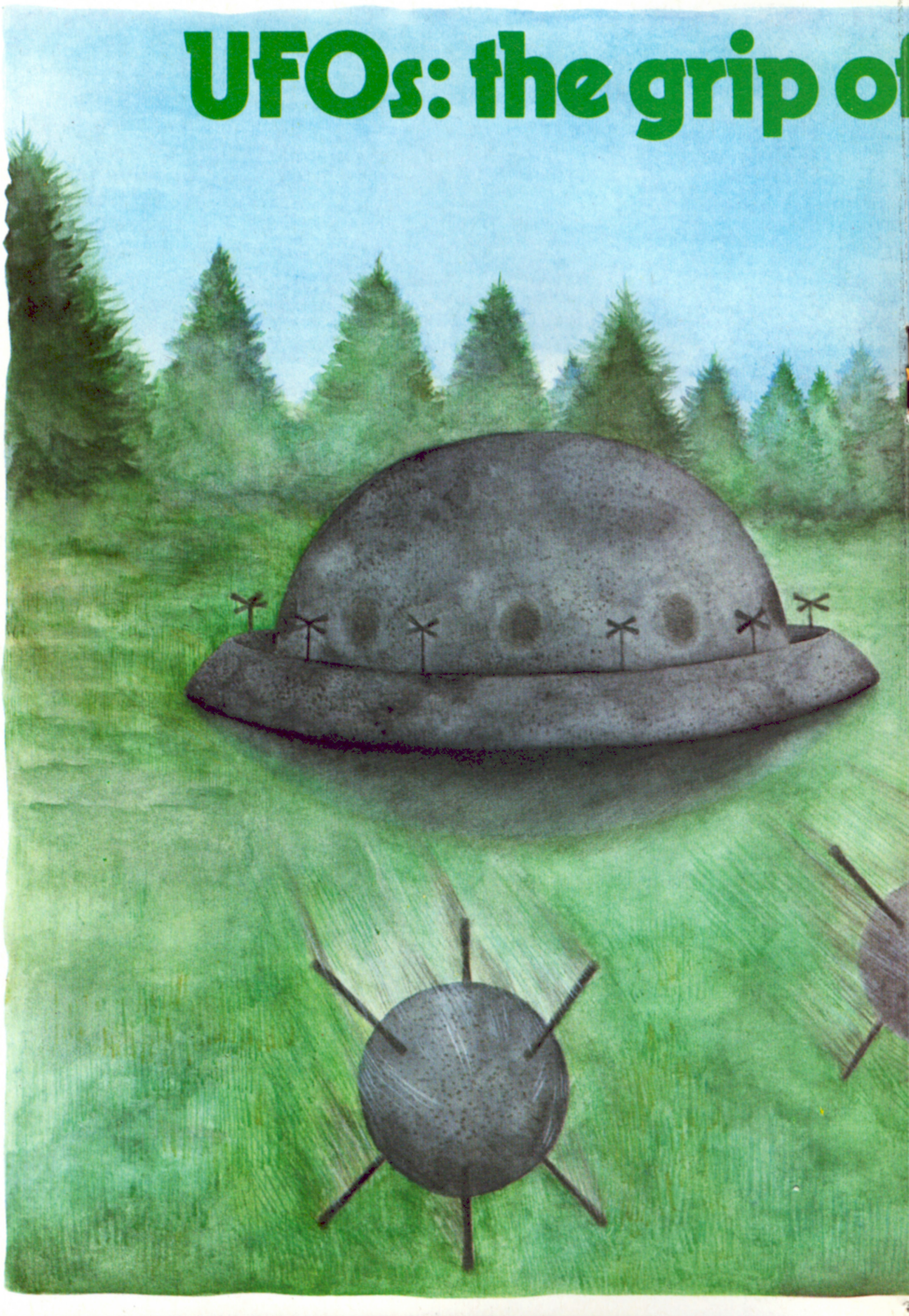
But what about the poltergeist's appearance as a black-robed monk? My own suspicion is that the spirit simply overheard the Pritchards talking about the hypothetical rapist-monk, and decided to provide them with some evidence – just as it slashed their wedding photograph after overhearing their neighbour say that poltergeists often destroy photographs.

There is, I think, only one chance of learning the poltergeist's identity. That is, if some future teenager living at 30 East Drive provides it with the energy it needs to manifest itself again, and some competent psychical researcher can get in touch with it. It would be interesting to know. But I have a feeling that the Pritchards would prefer to remain in ignorance.

Mrs Maude Pearce – 'Aunt Maude' – who, when the poltergeist activity was at its height, arrived at the Pritchards' house to investigate the goings on. Believing that the children were playing tricks, she declared: 'It was those kids' – and a jug of milk floated across the room and emptied itself on her head. Her visit ended when the family was threatened by what appeared to be a huge pair of hands. To keep her courage up, Aunt Maude broke into a spirited rendering of *Onward Christian soldiers* – and, whimsically, the hands began to beat time

UFOs: the grip of

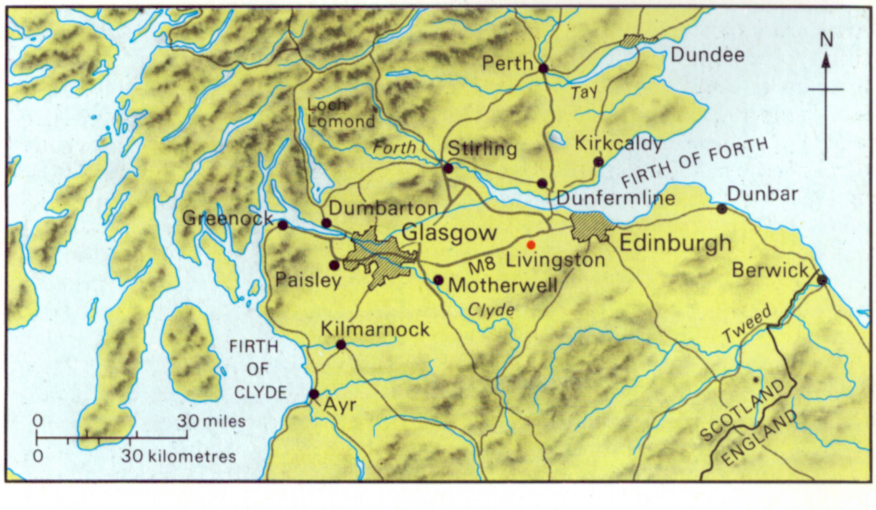
The object in a forest clearing had the appearance of a classic 'flying saucer' – and its effects on the elderly forester who came upon it were terrifying. This close encounter and the thorough investigation that followed are described by STEUART CAMPBELL



TO BE OF INTEREST to a ufologist, an object must be more than merely unidentified: it must also be of 'high strangeness', as the jargon has it. Thus a flashing white light passing overhead may be unidentified: but if there is nothing exceptional about it, there will be no reason to suppose that it is other than a conventional aircraft. However, if it wobbles rapidly in its flight, it must be regarded as 'strange', and the UFO researcher will be intrigued. Sceptics claim that 'strange' UFO cases invariably turn out to be based on unreliable evidence, while the most reliable cases have simple, 'non-strange' explanations. But the case of the Livingston UFO encounter will confound them, for it is both 'strange' and based on reliable evidence.

The Livingston case is classed as a close encounter of the second kind – meaning that the UFO was seen at close quarters and interacted with the environment. In fact it left evidence of its visit and physically affected the witness. Because of the high quality of the data the case may become a classic.

Livingston is a new town 13 miles (21 kilometres) west of Edinburgh in Scotland. The town is generously spread over the rolling West Lothian landscape, so there are many trees and much open space. A forest adjoins the M8 Glasgow–Edinburgh motorway at the northern edge of the town. The scene of the extraordinary events is a small clearing in this forest, only 110 yards (100 metres) from the motorway, but not within sight of it. Access to the clearing, via back roads and forest tracks, is difficult.



Prelude to the incredible

The only witness to the encounter was Robert Taylor, then 61 years old. At the time he was employed as a foreman forester by Livingston Development Corporation, which manages the forests through its own Forestry Department. Mr Taylor, a quiet and phlegmatic Scot, had spent his entire life in forestry. He had a reputation for honesty and plain dealing and was regarded by his employers as responsible and reliable. He was married, with several grown-up children. He had heard of 'flying saucers' and UFOs, but took no interest in them.

For reasons that will become clear later, we must record his state of health. Like many older people, he suffered from angina and high blood pressure, possibly as a result of atherosclerosis (incipient hardening of the

Above: the weird sight that astounded forester Robert Taylor in November 1979 – a 'flying saucer' in a forest clearing. Two small spheres approached him – and he passed out

Left: Livingston new town lies on the M8 motorway. The encounter occurred only yards from this busy road

Right: Malcolm Drummond, Robert Taylor's boss, was first to visit the scene after the incident

arteries). He had undergone two minor operations and suffered two serious diseases. In 1965 he had viral meningitis, from which he made a good recovery, and in 1977 he suffered mild hepatitis. He had no history of head injury and did not normally suffer headaches, dizziness or blackouts, although a few months before the incident he complained of severe headaches for which no cause could be found. His hearing was good and he needed spectacles only for reading. Although he drank alcohol occasionally, he did not do so during working hours.

The encounter occurred on Friday, 9 November 1979. As usual, Taylor went home for his mid-morning break about 9.30 a.m. He was on his way back to work by about 10 a.m. He drove a Forestry Department pick-up truck and was accompanied by Lara, his Irish setter. His purpose that morning was to check that sheep had not wandered into any of the forests and that all gates were secure. He drove the truck as far as he could down a narrow track and parked it; thereafter he had to walk. Lara was exploring among the trees and was out of sight as Taylor rounded a corner in the track into the clearing at about 10.15 a.m. There he stopped in amazement.

Sitting on the ground, or hovering just above it, in the centre of the clearing was a large object. It was shaped like the upper half of a sphere, with a rim or flange at the 'equator'. It was about 20 feet (6 metres) across. The lower hemisphere was not visible, or was non-existent. There was neither visible movement nor audible sound.

A UFO with propellers

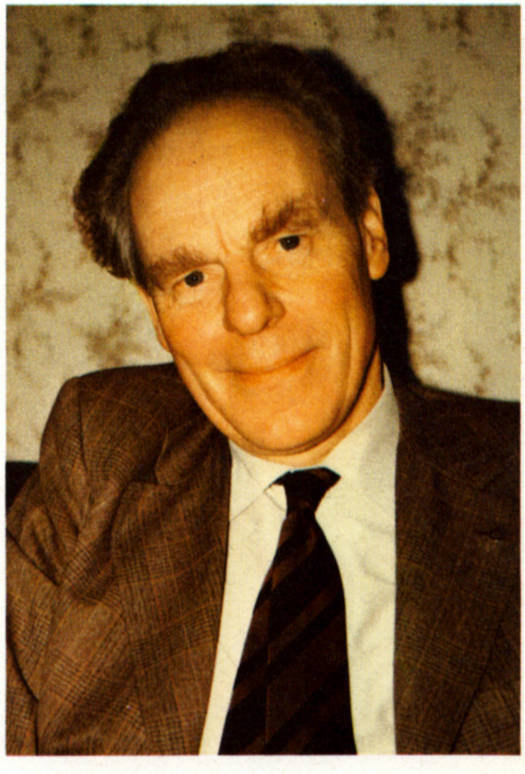
The object was a dark grey colour, later likened by Taylor to the colour and texture of emery paper. But periodically different parts changed in appearance to become transparent or reflective. Protruding from the upper edge of the flange were several regularly spaced stems surmounted by what looked like propellers, although they did not rotate. Just above the rim on the surface of the hemisphere was a series of circular patches even darker than the surrounding surface. No other features were visible. Taylor immediately concluded that the object was a spacecraft.

Almost immediately, perhaps as a response to his arrival, Taylor was approached by two smaller objects. He did not see exactly where they came from, only that they came roughly from the direction of the 'spacecraft'. Each object was a sphere, between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet (50 centimetres and 1 metre) in diameter and was the same colour and texture as the larger object. Attached to each sphere were several protrusions or 'legs' sticking out in all directions, and it was on these that the spheres rolled rapidly towards Taylor. He noticed that as each 'leg' touched the ground it made a sucking or plopping noise. Taylor was overwhelmed by a very strong pungent smell, which he likened to that of burning brake linings; it nearly choked him. The spheres stopped, one on each side of him, and each attached a 'leg' to the leg of his trousers, just below the pocket. Almost at once he felt the spheres pull him forwards towards the 'spacecraft', tugging him by his trousers. Struggling for breath and trying to resist the pull of the spheres, he lost consciousness and collapsed.

When Taylor regained consciousness he was alone except for Lara, who was barking in concern for her master. The strange objects had all disappeared. When he tried to speak to the dog he found that he had lost his voice. When he tried to stand he discovered that his legs would not support him. He had a frontal headache and a strong thirst and he felt sick. He was still aware of the foul smell as a taste in his mouth, and his chin was sore.

Taylor crawled on all fours for about 100 yards (90 metres) back along the forest track before he was able to stand up. He then continued, walking unsteadily, until he reached the truck. Clearly he ought to report the event to his office over the two-way radio, but he still lacked speech. He tried to reverse the truck, but it ran off the track into soft ground and became stuck. Consequently he had to walk home (his house was nearer than the office), a distance of just over a mile (1.8 kilometres), via a short cut through fields and woods. His voice returned while he was on the journey home. He arrived about 11.15 a.m.

When Mrs Taylor saw her husband's dirty face and clothes and heard him mutter that he had been attacked by a 'spaceship thing', she wanted to call their doctor, but was restrained by her husband. He took a



bath. He complained of the smell, but his wife could not detect it. She telephoned Malcolm Drummond, the head of the Forestry Department, who in turn notified the doctor, Gordon Adams. Drummond arrived at the house first and immediately interviewed Taylor in his bath. Taylor explained what had happened and insisted that there must still be marks on the ground where the 'machine' had 'landed'. Drummond dashed up to the woods but could find no marks.

Meanwhile Taylor, now out of his bath, had told the doctor: 'You're not going to believe this story!' Dr Adams examined Taylor but found very little wrong with him. He did have a slight graze under his chin and another on his left thigh, but there was no sign of head injury or brain compression, although he still had a headache. His temperature, blood pressure, heart and lungs were normal.

The doctor wanted a head x-ray made and a psychiatric report and he telephoned for an ambulance to take Taylor to nearby Bangour General Hospital. Meanwhile he allowed him to accompany Drummond and other Forestry Department personnel back to the forest. When Taylor showed his colleagues where the 'spaceship' had stood, they all saw strange marks in the grass. This area, about 25 by 20 feet (7.5 by 6 metres), was immediately fenced off and the police were informed.

Mr and Mrs Taylor went by ambulance to the hospital, but they were kept waiting about two hours. Because they had planned to visit relatives in England over the weekend, Robert Taylor discharged himself without being examined.

Mrs Taylor had already noticed that her husband's trousers were torn on both sides, near the pockets. There was also a hole in one leg of his long johns. All the clothing he had been wearing was later taken by the police for forensic examination.

The police at Bathgate were notified about 2 p.m. that day and immediately visited the clearing in the forest. They photographed the marks, measured them and searched the whole area.

So many people now knew of the incident that it was inevitable that the press would be informed. Through a local newspaper the main daily papers in Edinburgh and Glasgow picked up the story in time for their Saturday editions; the author was informed

Robert Taylor stands in the clearing where he suffered his traumatic encounter with the three mystery objects. His boss said of him: 'Bob Taylor is not a man to make something up. If he says he was attacked by some creatures then there must have been something there.' But the case would probably have quickly been forgotten had inexplicable markings on the ground not been found at the site of the encounter

The aliens...

Close encounter with the little grey robots

THIS IS forestry worker Bob Taylo... ing of an alien space craft and ... with which he came face t... wood.

"They were dull ... he said. Before the... like naval mines with...

BOB'S SPACE KIDNA...

by STUART McCARTNEY

...AKEN forestry worker ... he was ... by

SPACE THUGS' ATTACK ...

BOB AND HIS DOG

...E "close encounter" mystery of a forestry ...orker who claims he was attacked by creatures ...rom space deepened yesterday.

Dozens of people came forward to say they saw swooping lights in the sky the night before 50-year-old Bob Taylor staggered, shocked and bleeding, from a wood.

And police said they are "seriously" investigating strange ...ks in the ground that Mr ... were made by a ...

"I went with pause to ... where it hop... saw deep...

How the national press told the story. The newspapers were determined to represent the incident as a case of mugging by robots from another planet. But is a terrestrial explanation not possible?

of the encounter by a reporter on the Friday evening. This enabled him to make arrangements to visit the scene the next morning. All Britain heard of the incident when the story was carried by the *Sunday Express* on 11 November ('Forester "attacked by visitors from space"'). The most sensational report was that of the *Sun* on 12 November, which claimed that 'space thugs' had attacked Taylor and his dog and that Taylor had been left cut and bleeding!

Investigations of the incident were conducted both by the Lothian and Borders police and by the author (on behalf of the British UFO Research Association). The police investigation quickly established that there was no obvious simple explanation. The markings in the grass were not connected to any others – in fact there were no others in the area – and there was no sign that any vehicles had recently driven through the area. One officer conducted a fruitless search for signs of a mobile crane that might have been used to drop an object into the clearing! No helicopter activity had been reported; in any case the marks were not those of a helicopter. The police could find no rational explanation for the marks or for any other aspect of Taylor's story; yet they found no reason to question his honesty.

A ripping yarn

Forensic examination of the trousers showed that the holes in them were tears – not cuts or burns – caused by some broad attachment pulling the material upwards. There were also some anomalous small holes associated with the tears. The hole in the long johns coincided with one of the trouser tears, as did the graze on Taylor's thigh.

The author began his investigation by asking whether or not Taylor could have torn his clothing on the way home that day. But there was no need for him to jump fences or struggle through undergrowth on the route he took.

The markings on the ground were the next object of investigation. Even more compellingly than Robert Taylor's account and the injuries he had suffered, they testified that something extraordinary had happened in the forest clearing that day.

The mystery of the Livingston encounter is pursued on page 3026

How strange

Reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9		NNNND	N	D	I	I	RI	RRII	
8	NN	NNNND	NNNNN NDD	RIIIN NND	RRRRI IID	RRIID	IIIII II	IIIIIII III	IIIII
7	NNN	NNNND D	RNNNN NNNDD DD	NDDDD	RRRII IIIND DD	RIID	IIIIII IIIIIII D	IIIIII II	IIIII
6	NN	NNND	NDDDD DDD	DD	RI		IIIIII II	IIIIIII II	IIIIII
5	NND	NNDDD DDD	IDDDD	RIIDD D	IIIIID DD	IIII	IIIIII III	IIIIIII IIIIIII	II
4	NN	NNNND DDD	D	DD	I		I	IIIII	III
3	N	ND	INN						
2	DD	N							
1									

Strangeness

N Nocturnal lights
D Daylight discs
R Radar-visual

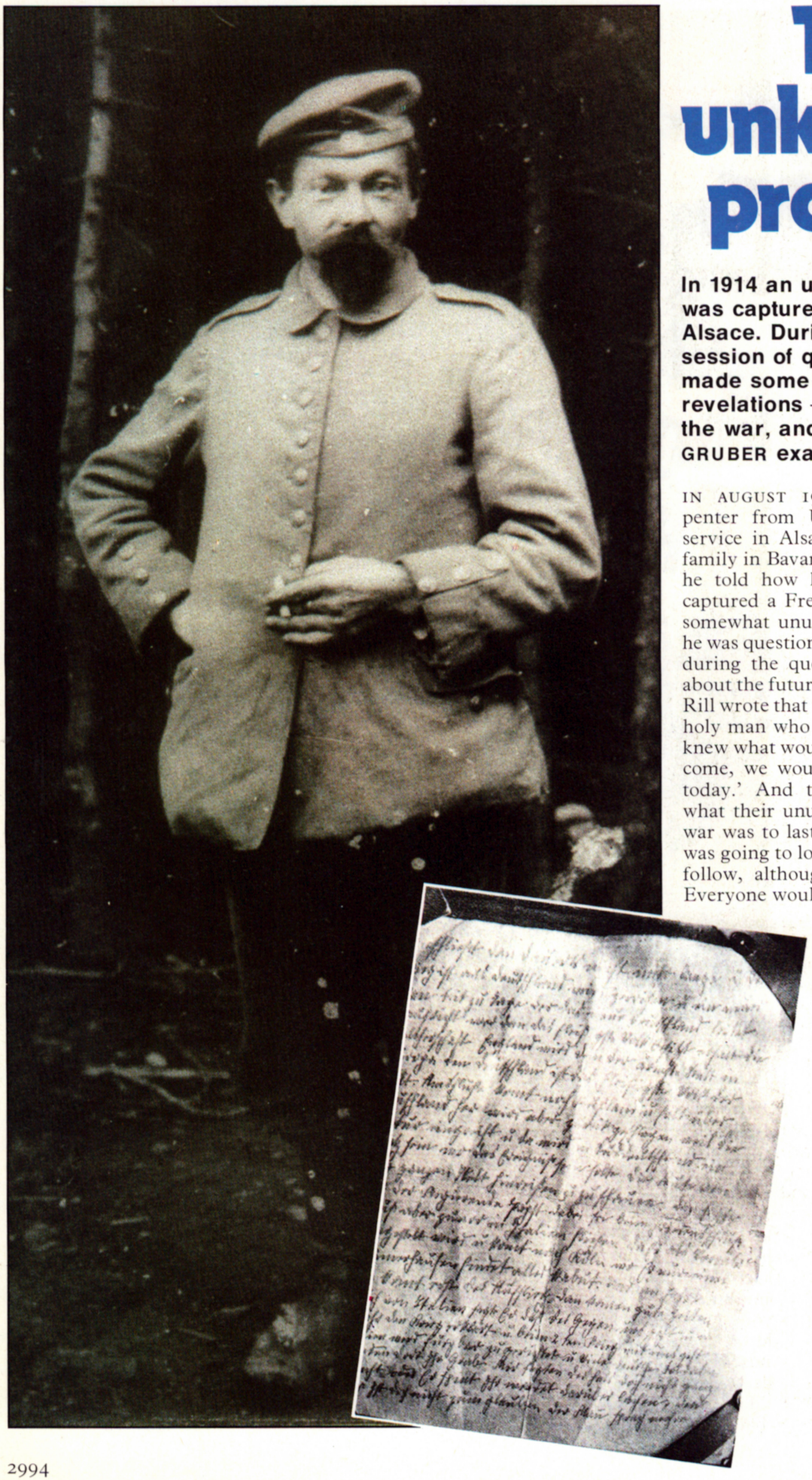
I } Close encounters
II } of the first, second
III } and third kind

The 'strangeness-reliability matrix' of Dr J. Allen Hynek represents the ufologist's assessment of a case. The columns of the matrix, or array, are numbered (left) from 1 to 9 according to a rating of the 'strangeness' of the event, based on the number of puzzling features in the report. The rows of the matrix represent the report's estimated reliability, which depends on the number of witnesses, their individual credibility, the presence of physical traces, and so on. In this diagram, over 200 cases have been entered in their appropriate boxes. Each is represented by a symbol indicating the nature of the sighting (see page 6). As the diagram shows, many reliable reports of nocturnal lights are of low strangeness, for the objects seen generally lack detail. Most close encounters are of high strangeness – but despite the claims of many sceptics, many such cases are highly reliable.

The unknown prophet

In 1914 an unidentified Frenchman was captured by German forces in Alsace. During an all-night session of questioning, the man made some extraordinary revelations – about the future of the war, and of the world. ELMAR GRUBER examines the story

IN AUGUST 1914 ANDREAS RILL, a carpenter from Untermühlhausen on active service in Alsace, wrote two letters to his family in Bavaria, Germany. In these letters he told how he and another soldier had captured a Frenchman who proved to be a somewhat unusual prisoner. After capture, he was questioned all through the night – and during the questioning he began to speak about the future of the war. In his first letter, Rill wrote that the Frenchman was a 'strange holy man who said incredible things. If we knew what would happen during the years to come, we would throw away our weapons today.' And then the carpenter reported what their unusual prisoner told them: the war was to last for five years and Germany was going to lose it; a revolution would then follow, although it would not really end. Everyone would become a millionaire; there



Above left: Andreas Rill, the Bavarian carpenter whose letters home while on active service in Alsace in 1914 were more than a little out of the ordinary. For in one of them (left) he told of a Frenchman he had taken prisoner – a man who had been able to tell him the course the war was to take

Above: Dr Hans Bender (left) of the Freiburg Institute for Border Areas of Psychology and Mental Hygiene examines one of the Rill letters with Father Frumentius Renner. Father Renner came across the letters in the 1950s, and published them in a mission journal – but, unaccountably, they passed almost unnoticed

Right: Adolf Hitler. According to Rill, the unknown Frenchman not only predicted the course of the First World War, but also forecast the establishment of the Weimar Republic, Hitler's rise to power, and the Second World War and its outcome

would be so much money that it would be thrown out of windows and no one would bother to pick it up. (At this point the author of the letter remarked: 'Ridiculous!') At this time the Antichrist would be born; he would be a tyrant, passing new laws every day; the people would become poorer without realising it. This time would begin around 1932 and would last for nine years. In 1938 preparations for war would begin; this war would last three years and it would end badly for the dictator and his followers; the people would rise against him in anger; things would become known 'that are simply inhuman'; everyone would be very poor; Germany would be torn apart.

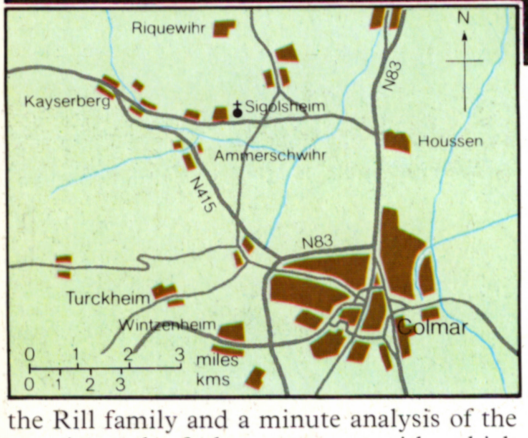
Andreas Rill's second letter contains some details of the predictions of the end of this war: 'The man and his sign will disappear,' and hatred and envy would be rife; and 'when there is a 4 and 5 in the year [1945], Germany will be pressed from all sides and totally plundered and destroyed'; foreign powers would occupy Germany. But, by virtue of its resourcefulness, Germany would recover. In the first letter Andreas Rill noted further that 'Italy will be against us in this war within a year and will be on our side in the second war'; many German soldiers would die in Italy. The letters tell of a third war beginning with an invasion by Russia of south-east Germany; this was to happen during 1947 or 1948, and during the war that followed the 'mountains will spit fire'; 'between the Danube and the Inn everything will be totally erased'; 'the streams are so shallow that no bridges will be needed to pass'; in Russia the rulers would be killed; there would be so many dead people that there would be no one to bury them.

Suspicion of authenticity

At first sight the letters are astonishing – the details are so extraordinarily accurate, even down to dates. When they were presented for examination to the Freiburg Institute for Border Areas of Psychology and Mental Hygiene, the first reaction was suspicion as to the authenticity of the letters. But experts in criminology testified that there are no signs that the letters are forged, or that parts of them were altered after they were written. The son of the author of the letters, Siegmund Rill (born 1906), told Professor Hans Bender and myself during our visit to his home in Weil, Bavaria, that everyone in the neighbourhood remembered Andreas Rill and his letters very well. After the first predictions had proved to be accurate, Andreas Rill told the story of the strange Frenchman to several of his friends in local pubs. Reportedly Rill became almost blasé, and somewhat fatalistic, after he saw one prediction after another fulfilled: the German defeat in the First World War, inflation and, finally, the upsurge of Nazism under Hitler. At that time the prophecies of the unidentified French prisoner became widely known in Bavaria, and one day a police crime squad showed up at the Rills' home to question him about his conviction that the future would bring tyranny. The son told us that it was only by chance that his father escaped imprisonment in a concentration camp.

During the 1950s the letters came into the possession of one Father Frumentius Renner, who published them in a mission journal, where they passed almost unnoticed. Until Professor Bender learned about the existence of the letters, no efforts were made to examine their authenticity or to establish the true identity of the mysterious prophet. It was a comparatively easy matter, at the Freiburg Institute, to have the letters checked by criminologists, but it was the work of some years to uncover the visionary.

Through careful tracing of members of



Above: the monastery at Sigolsheim, Alsace, where the Freiburg Institute's search for the identity of the mysterious French prophet eventually led them. Their researches revealed that a Frater Laicus Tertiarius – a person who lives in a monastery as a guest of the religious community – had died at Sigolsheim in 1917. Rill had captured the French prophet in 1914; in 1918, when his company was stationed at Turckheim (see map, left), he apparently walked to a monastery to look for the visionary, but was told he had died. Turckheim is within walking distance of Sigolsheim; could the French prophet have been the unknown Frater Laicus Tertiarius?

the Rill family and a minute analysis of the war journal of the company with which Andreas Rill had served, we tried to find the exact spot at which the Frenchman was captured. Andreas Rill's sons told us that the visionary was apparently a rich man who gave away all his earthly wealth to join a monastery in Alsace. Before that he was said to have belonged to a Freemason's Lodge in Colmar. Our researches revealed that Rill's company must have been around Colmar in Alsace when the prophet was interviewed. Siegmund Rill was sure that his father met the visionary in a monastery near Colmar; and we confirmed that part of Rill's company was housed in a Capuchin monastery at Sigolsheim, 6 miles (10 kilometres) from Colmar, at the time. Some years later, in 1918, Rill and his company were stationed at Turckheim, near Colmar. His son told us that Rill took the opportunity to go, on foot, to the monastery to look again for the visionary, but was told that he had died in the meantime.

We checked the lists of inhabitants of all the Capuchin monasteries in the area and found one slight clue that might point towards the person we were looking for: in the Sigolsheim monastery there had lived a certain Frater Laicus Tertiarius who had died at some time after 1917 but before Rill's second visit to the place. A Frater Laicus Tertiarius is a person who is not a member of a monastery, but who lives there as a guest. It could well have been that the prophet would not have been immediately accepted as a member of the monastery, particularly if he had been a rich man and a Freemason in his earlier life. Furthermore, it is easy to reach Sigolsheim by foot from Turckheim, so this may well have been the place that Andreas Rill visited when stationed in Turckheim in 1918.

We found several passages in the war journal that might have a bearing on the prophecies. One prediction the Frenchman made – noted in one of the Rill letters – was that a certain Corporal G., who ridiculed the visionary, would not come home from the war and that his body would not be buried, but would be eaten by ravens. True enough, on 23 September 1914, Corporal G. went missing while on a patrol. The war journal notes that his remains were found and identified in February 1915. The war journal also contains a note, concerning Corporal G. and dated the day of his disappearance, from the private journal of Colonel Schleicher putting it on record that the corporal was 'seeing spirits again.'

It remains puzzling that such a detailed

and important prophecy did not become better known. Why should the Frenchman tell his visions only to his German captors? Was this the only prophecy he ever uttered? This is hard to believe; but we are left with no more substantial evidence than the two letters written by Andreas Rill to his family.

An important aspect to consider is, of course, how good the precognitions turned out to be. Andreas Rill's first letter is an account of what the Frenchman said, while the second represents Rill's reflections on his experience with the visionary. The second letter, written some days after the first, also gives details about a third world war. It seems that Rill selected from the prophet's words only those aspects of the third war prophecy that related to his home, Bavaria. In considering the predictions of the three wars, we should bear in mind that the prophet was French, and although the author of the letters reports that he spoke several languages (it is most probable that he spoke German with the soldiers), some misunderstandings may have arisen through the prisoner's imperfect command of the German language. Considering the Frenchman was interviewed for many hours at night, it is hard to believe that Rill could have remembered all he said.

Psychological studies of reports of witnesses show how poorly people are, in general, able to recollect events they have experienced. One should not forget, too, that the prisoner's prophecies were of the highest interest among the soldiers and that discussion may have prompted embroidery of the truth.

But the prophecy does, with fair accuracy, forecast political developments in Europe for many years to come. The successful predictions include the duration of the First World War from 1 August 1914 to the armistice of 11 November 1918; revolution and the establishment of the Weimar Republic on 9 November 1918; the leftist revolution and its failure to retain power; inflation until 1923; the election of the Nazi party in January 1933; the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; the attack on Poland in August 1939; the occupation of Norway and Holland in May 1940; the attack on Russia in June 1941; the landing of Allied forces in Sicily in July 1943; Hitler's suicide and the surrender of Germany in May 1945, and its occupation by American, English, French and Soviet troops; the loss of German territory and the division into two states; and the rapid recovery of the Federal Republic of Germany under chancellor Adenauer.

What of the predictions concerning a third world war? A psychic who gives an accurate prediction in one case may, of course, be totally wrong in another. At Freiburg we have experienced this time and again in experiments with the famous psychic Gerard Croiset. Thus the prediction of a war yet to come may well be completely wrong. The time when it was supposed to take place, 1946 to 1948, has passed. This may mean that the prediction is erroneous. But the dates may also have been noted wrongly, or the prophet, speaking a foreign language, may have given them wrongly.

There is no question that in Europe now a possible third world war, with its horrifying potential for destruction, is felt as a constant imminent danger. The psychic may have 'picked up' this general anxiety and mistaken it for the events actually happening.

Whether it is a precognition of potential danger or mere fantasy – or something in between – the case of the French prophet, with such detailed predictions fulfilled with such accuracy, remains a puzzling and enigmatic footnote in the files of parapsychology.

Above: Warsaw pact manoeuvres in Poland in 1981, and (right) an anti-nuclear-weapon demonstration that took place in Bonn, West Germany, also in 1981. The French prophet forecast a third world war that was to take place between 1946 and 1948: 'mountains will spit fire'; 'everything will be totally erased'. This did not, of course, happen – but could the French prophet have been 'tuning in', not to actual events in the future, but to the general climate of anxiety about the nuclear arms race that has existed ever since the atomic explosions that ended the Second World War?

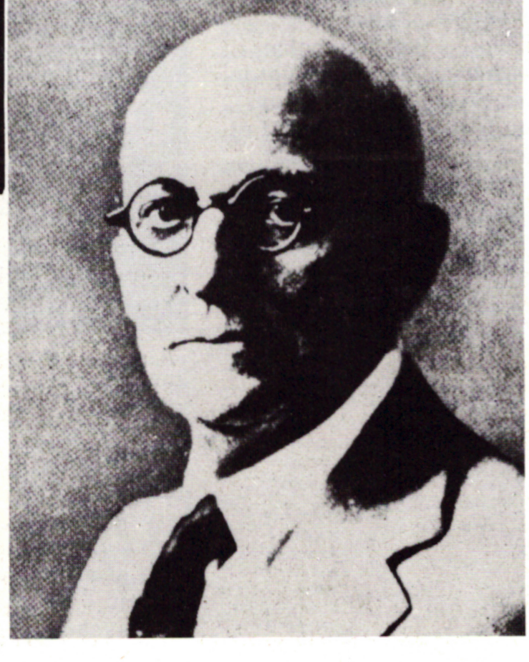
Secrets of the black box

Practitioners of radionics believe that a lock of hair or drop of blood placed in a 'black box' can be used to diagnose illness – even if the patient is many miles away. FRANCIS KING looks at this controversial practice

IN 1943 GEORGE DE LA WARR, an engineer employed by Oxfordshire County Council, decided that his wife's hairpins could be employed to measure the 'life radiation' of the Universe. From his earliest years George Warr – he adopted his aristocratic prefix in later life – had been interested in homoeopathy, the system of alternative medicine that employs drugs in extremely diluted form.

George de la Warr's attitude towards homoeopathy was ambivalent. He decided that all the theories that underlay this system of therapy were absolute rubbish – a conclusion with which practitioners of orthodox medicine would still tend to agree. Nevertheless, he thought, remarkable cures of physical and psychological illness had been experienced by patients who had employed what Brian Inglis, a writer and expert on alternative medicine, has called 'the magic of the minimum dose'.

But if homoeopathy were rubbish, de la Warr asked himself, why was it sometimes so successful?



Above: George de la Warr, the English engineer who, some believe, improved on the 'black box' of American radionics pioneer Dr Albert Abrams (right). In 1960 de la Warr was sued for fraud but the judge ruled that, as de la Warr clearly believed in the efficacy of his boxes, there was no *intention* to defraud. Even so, the publicity the case attracted (above right) damaged the reputation of radionics

It was, he decided, because all living things were permeated by some vital force that is in some way stimulated by the homoeopathic method of prescribing drugs – in dilution so extreme that, on occasion, the drug supposedly being administered cannot be detected by chemical analysis. He decided to isolate and measure this force, which, he believed, was possibly electromagnetic, by the use of the form of dowsing known as radiesthesia. In this the operator 'dowses' for, say, a mineral, by holding a pendulum over a map while asking, mentally, 'Is it silver? Is it tin?' and interpreting the gyrations of the pendulum as answers to the questions. The same principle can be applied to asking questions of the pendulum as it swings over a series of words – the one it settles over being the answer – or using the technique to discover the nature of an illness and selecting a cure.

'Radiesthesic research' indicated to de la Warr a promising line of investigation. He

Lifting the lid

Despite the ridicule that radionics has attracted, as a diagnostic tool it has often proved startlingly accurate – sometimes embarrassingly so for the patient.

One of Dr Albert Abrams post-graduate courses in the use of his 'black box' culminated in a dramatic incident. One of the students – himself a doctor – had complained of chest pains. Abrams called him to the front of the class and took a blood sample, which he placed in his box – and got a reading for syphilis. The doctor blustered, 'I don't care what your readings say! I tell you I've never had it!' But before a stunned audience Abrams proceeded to tell him that he had, indeed, got the disease – and had caught it from a man. Hastily Abrams added: 'Medical men often get infected on the hands.' And, by pointing an electrode attached to his box at each of the doctor's fingers in turn, Abrams got a reaction from the middle finger of the man's left hand, where there was a small scar.

Scandal was averted, however, when the doctor remembered: 'I jabbed that finger with a needle while sewing up a man after an operation. I never thought. . . .'

Below: radionics expert David Tansley 'dowsing' for the nature of the illness of an absent patient, using the 'Mark 3 Centre Therapy' radionic device he designed and built himself. In radionics the pendulum is used primarily to stimulate the practitioner's own latent powers of ESP – and so 'tune in' to the patient. And, as all diseases are believed to give off specific 'radiations', they can be ascertained by adjusting the calibrated dials on the 'box'

attached aerials made from his wife's hairpins to a number of plants, which varied from seedlings to a full grown tree, and connected them to an amplifier and from thence to a cathode ray tube. He could detect no signals at all from the plants. This negative result, however, caused him no concern. It seems never to have entered de la Warr's head that the reason no signals were detected was probably because there were no signals to detect. Instead he decided that the 'life radiation' was not electromagnetic in nature but that it was probably connected with the 'electronic reaction of Abrams'.

Albert Abrams was an American physician with an excellent academic background who, in the last years of the 19th century, discovered that percussing the chest or abdomen of a patient produced markedly different sounds, which he took to be indicative of different diseases. Later Abrams found that he could diagnose illness from a drop of blood or lock of hair alone. He was, however, most famous for his 'black boxes', which he manufactured and sold in large numbers between 1900 and his death in 1924. He died a millionaire.

Dr Abrams's black boxes had grown more impressive to look at over the years, but their basic design remained unchanged. On the outside of the box were a number of calibrated controls, rather like those on an old-fashioned radio, plus input and output sockets and, on most later models, a pad of tightly stretched rubber. Inside the box (which owners were not supposed to open) was a bewildering mass of electrical gadgetry that served no apparent purpose and seemed to have been wired together at random.

Boxing match

Later Abrams's original method was simplified: the therapist tapped the rubber pad with his finger while adjusting each knob until there was a response – which took the form of an unusual 'plonking' sound. The numbered graduations on the controls at each 'plonk' were carefully noted by the operator, for these indicated both the nature of the patient's illness and the appropriate remedy. Another black box, 'the oscilloclast', was employed to broadcast healing radiations to distant patients. Its internal circuitry was as weird as that of the diagnostic machines.

In spite of the lunatic electronics of Abrams's machines they were subjected to some quite serious testing by medical authorities. Lord Horder, one of the physicians to the royal family, found – much to his surprise – that he could operate the box and obtain some kind of diagnosis. But his results were almost invariably inconsistent – a patient often seemed to be suffering from quite different illnesses from one minute to the next.

In the 1940s, however, de la Warr decided that all the Abrams black box needed was to be brought up to date and simplified. There is no doubt that he achieved this – the inside of the de la Warr black box was quite free of the

An early model of de la Warr's 'radionic camera', which was used to photograph samples of blood or tissue in total darkness. It allegedly produced a picture of the sample surrounded by its 'life force' or 'force field', the nature of which would indicate the type and severity of the patient's illness. The camera was, moreover, alleged to be capable of photographing events in the past. Perhaps this was not such a bizarre idea as it sounded in the 1950s: today 'thoughtography', or the photographing of thoughtforms, has achieved respectability among modern parapsychologists

electrical junk wired together by Abrams. In fact it contained nothing at all.

Nevertheless, there were circuits of a kind. From a rubber pad, similar to those used in black boxes of Abrams's later manufacture, wires led to containers designed to hold blood or other samples, and then to eight graduated control knobs – and, finally, back to the rubber pad. However, the control knobs controlled nothing but the length of the circuit.

De la Warr, and those who purchased his boxes, would place a sample of blood, hair or tissue in the container, and then stroke the rubber pad with a finger while slowly turning the first of the control knobs. When the operator got a 'stick' – that is, when his or her finger adhered momentarily to the pad instead of sliding smoothly across it – the number of the control knob would be noted. The process would then be repeated with each of the other knobs.

The number derived from all this activity was considered of great importance and its significance ascertained from de la Warr's instructional manual, *A guide to clinical conditions*. How de la Warr first determined the medical significance of these strings of numbers is unclear; perhaps from a prolonged process of trial and error, but more probably from radiesthesic pendulum swinging.

Having devised a 'diagnosis' machine, de la Warr went on to produce an equally impressive 'radionic therapy' box. Both types of black box sold well and by 1956 de la Warr had attracted a great deal of publicity and a surprisingly large number of disciples.

By this time de la Warr had also invented and was marketing a 'radionic camera'. This was used to photograph blood spots and tissue samples *in the dark*; when the films from them were developed they allegedly showed the blood spot surrounded by its vital force field. Even more remarkable was the claim that the radionic camera was capable of some sort of time travel; de la Warr succeeded, he said, in using it to photograph his own wedding, an event that had taken place over 20 years earlier.

By 1960 his private quasi-medical practice, together with his sale of black boxes and radionic cameras, had made him a rich man; in today's terms his annual income was somewhere in the region of £100,000. For a time radionics seemed destined to be the most commercially successful of all fringe therapies. But then came Nemesis – in the shape of a Miss Catherine Phillips.

A deceitful device?

Miss Phillips, an ex-disciple of de la Warr, had bought both black boxes and a radionic camera from him. She found them unsatisfactory and sued him, alleging that 'he fraudulently represented that there were . . . distinctive waves, vibrations and radiations capable of affecting a device of the defendant called a de la Warr diagnostic instrument.'

Miss Phillips lost her case – it was held that there was no intention to defraud because de la Warr quite obviously believed in the reality of his 'discoveries' and the efficacy of his machines and cameras. On the other hand, the judge expressed his doubts as to whether the boxes worked as they were supposed to – and, even worse, made it clear that he regarded the radionic photographs produced in evidence as fakes, although he expressed no opinion as to the identity of the fraud.

De la Warr died in 1969. Over the nine years that had elapsed since the High Court case there had been a steady decline in the sale of black boxes and other radionic equipment. New disciples had become few and far between.

Nevertheless, some disciples remained. George de la Warr's widow carried on his practice, and there continued to be isolated reports of 'miracle cures' produced by radionics. Some of these seem genuine enough; there are at least some people who attribute their recovery from severe illness to radionics. But how can this happen?

One possible explanation is the well-known 'placebo effect' – a patient is cured, not because of any intrinsic virtue in the treatment given him, but because he *believes* he is going to be cured. Another possibility is that some radionics practitioners are 'spiritual healers', attributing cures to black boxes when the real credit belongs to themselves.

Post script

Your letters to THE UNEXPLAINED

Dear Sir,
Although agreeing that much of the criticism of the solectric theory propounded by my late grand-uncle Captain A. J. Cooper [issues 132 and 134] is prima facie justified, I am not prepared to accept that his predictions were no more than chance.

In his article Dr Ian Walker says that 'Captain Cooper does not tell us how frequently earthquakes occurred in Chile' and quotes *The Times* as saying that 'hardly a week goes by without one or two shakes being recorded.' But in the present early stages of our knowledge of the solectric theory we are not interested for the time being in the slight shakes that occur almost daily, but in foretelling the major seismic disturbances. How often do these occur? The United States National Earthquake Information Service, in respect of 'significant earthquake activity', lists 28 earthquakes for 1976 and 1977. Only one was in South America. Therefore I consider that we must accept Captain Cooper's predictions as being indeed remarkable.

I have no evidence of any false predictions made by him. Any false predictions would have been seized upon by the Chilean press to malign him to a far greater extent than they already had done. He always maintained that, given enough trained staff, he could have predicted all major earthquakes.

The Valparaiso earthquake of 16 August 1906 occurred precisely as predicted by Captain Cooper. Dr Walker concedes this, but regards it as being due to pure chance. Once again, I cannot accept this.

I have always thought that Captain Cooper took much knowledge to the grave that he had not had time to put into writing. His second book, which he had partly prepared, might have told us much more. I regret that he died shortly after I left school, and I was precluded from picking his brains to a much greater extent than I had been able to do.
Yours faithfully,
W. A. Cooper Rollinson Milton Keynes, Bucks.

Dear Sir,
Some years ago, in October, I was walking home with my husband, having visited my mother on her birthday. When we were roughly 25 yards [23 metres] from the turning into the road where we live, we noticed a young man with fair hair wearing a light-coloured raincoat. He was using the cigarette machine on the wall of the local shop. It was roughly 10.30 p.m. As I remarked to my husband, I had visited the shop around 6 p.m. and noticed that the machine was out of order, as it had been for some time. It also had some glass broken.

As we approached, the machine was lit up and functioning, and we heard the coins drop. The man pushed the tray back into place and put his cigarettes into his raincoat pocket. He then turned into our road and, as we turned the corner and crossed to the left-hand side, he crossed to the right. He was now walking beside a wall; he then passed in front of railings that mark the boundary of a school playground. The railings are recessed, so the man was lost from our sight.

We were only seconds behind him when we reached our gate, which is almost opposite the school gate and gives a clear view of the whole playground area, and realised the man had disappeared!

The only place he could have gone was the playground, but on trying the gates my husband found them to be locked. Even could the man have jumped the gate, there would not have been time for him to cover the distance to the main building. Had he run, we would certainly have heard him.

The next day I found that the cigarette machine was still out of order, the glass broken as before. To this day the incident remains a mystery to us.

Another strange experience happened while we were on holiday. My brother, who was in his early twenties, had travelled with us to Cornwall. I awoke one morning just before dawn. I turned to face the window and was surprised to see my brother sitting in the chair that always stood by the window; he was just staring down into St Austell's Bay. My eyes were still full of sleep, and the harder I tried to focus him, the fainter the image became, until he was gone. The following morning I told my brother of my experience, and he replied that he had dreamed he had been sitting there, looking down at the bay – a view that had always fascinated him.
Yours faithfully,
P. Bloomfield Hoddesdon, Herts.

Dear Sir,
Concerning the picture of so-called 'light-absorbing UFOs' in *The Unexplained*, page 2649: this picture has all the characteristics of what is known in photographic technology as the 'adjacency effect' (or the Eberhard or Mackie effect). A photographic emulsion coated on a non-absorbent support (glass or film) is given an overall weak exposure. Then an area of the emulsion (in this case the dark spots) is given a heavy exposure. The emulsion is then placed in a developing tank, in a vertical position. The heavily exposed areas produce large amounts of chemical by-products, which slowly seep out around the edges of those areas. If the developing fluid is not agitated, these by-products slowly flow downwards and retard the development of the areas over which they flow. This causes light streaks descending from the dark areas. Your picture is a negative, and should be turned 90° clockwise to show the streaks running downward.

To me this is a typical example of bad film processing – if it was not a deliberate hoax.
Yours faithfully,
G. A. Cloud Solihull, West Midlands

Erratum: in the caption to a spirit photograph published on page 2432 (issue 122, The Unexplained*), we draw attention to the curious composition of the picture – it is as if the photograph has been deliberately framed to include the shadowy figure of a 'ghost' dog. We have received a letter from Janet and Colin Bord pointing out that the photograph we printed is cropped – in the original, the women appear in the centre, and the composition is balanced.*

Send *your* letters to THE UNEXPLAINED, Orbis House, 20–22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

Not enough shocks?

Two unforeseen earthquakes of 1983: they caused damage in California (above) and flooding in Japan (left)

Can the 80-year-old theory of solectrics really predict earthquakes? A modern computer generated a list of the theory's predictions: we assess their accuracy

Captain Alfred Cooper's ambitious theory of 'solectrics' attempted to explain earthquakes, thunderstorms and even mental and emotional disturbances in terms of the positions of the planets (see page 2621). The theory, developed in the early 1900s, was tested with a modern computer, which was used to produce a list of predictions for a period of several years. The first few predictions were not very successful; here we assess the accuracy of a further half dozen for the period from February to May 1983.

The first of these predictions was for a region 100 miles (160 kilometres) west of the city of Basra, in Iraq. The first and second 'warnings' provided by the planets were for 7 and 9 February. But the only shock that occurred in the Middle East that was substantial enough to be reported by the National Earthquake Information Service of the US Geological Survey was in southern Iran, on 7 February. And it was hundreds of miles from the predicted point, across the Persian Gulf.

The second prediction was for the USSR – at a point roughly 50 miles (80 kilometres) north of Semipalatinsk, on 8 or 9 March. But there were no significant tremors in the area during that month.

There were warnings for Venezuela on 19 and 22 March. The area at risk was on the coast, 130 miles (210 kilometres) west of Caracas. There was a tremor on the first date – but it was over 200 miles (320 kilometres) east of Caracas. Predictions for the Bari region, on the 'heel' of Italy, in early April were similarly unsuccessful – although 250 miles (400 kilometres) to the south, Mount Etna had erupted.

A solectric prediction of a disturbance at the westernmost tip of Peru, around 17 April, was also unsuccessful. The last prediction for this period gave a warning for a point in the Sea of Japan for 16 and 17 May. There was indeed a submarine tremor, but it came eight days later, and was hundreds of miles from the predicted spot: in fact, it occurred just off the Japanese coast and caused tidal waves in which over 100 Japanese died.

So the record of solectrics over this period was a dismal one. The theory would have been of no practical use – at least, in its present form – to authorities seeking to anticipate these earthquakes with reasonable accuracy, in order to take precautions against them.

Among the solectric predictions produced by the computer there were warnings, dated 30 September and 2 October 1983, for San Francisco, which lies on the notorious San Andreas fault. There were also threats to the city scheduled for 28 and 29 October 1984. And there were even warnings for London – not noted for its earthquake activity – in April 1984. But the record of solectrics to mid 1983 did not justify any qualms on the part of the inhabitants of either city.